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AUTHOR Kennedy, Kerry J.
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ABSTRACT

This paper describes an inservice education program for teachers entitled "Participation and Planning: The Classroom Teacher and the Curriculum Process." Fourteen teachers with varying backgrounds attended the course. The objectives of the course were to (1) provide participants with experiences in the design, implementation, and evaluation of educational materials; (2) equip participants with skills that will enable them to become effectively involved in the curriculum process, both during the course and in their schools; and (3) encourage participants to appreciate the significant role they can play in their own schools, concerning curriculum. The context for deliberation is described and the process of deliberation is portrayed based on an indepth analysis of recorded episodes of three teachers planning an energy education program. The results of the course enlarged the understanding of the contributions that teachers make to the deliberative process as well as some of the limitations. Appended are 13 references. (SI)

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CREATING A CONTEXT FOR CURRICULUM DELIBERATION BY TEACHERS

Kerry J Kennedy

Curriculum Development Centre, Canberra

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INTRODUCTION

Schwab (1983) has identified the members of an ideal curriculum team: teachers, principals, school board/community members, students, subject master specialists and psychologists. He was adamant that the inclusion of teachers was an issue of fundamental concern:

> ...teachers must be involved in debate, deliberation and decision about what and how to teach. Such involvement constitutes the only language in which knowledge adequate to an art can arise. Without such a language, teachers not only feel decisions as impositions, they find that intelligence cannot transverse the gap between the generalities of merely expounded instructions and the particularities of teaching moments. Participation in debate - deliberation - choice is required for learning what is needed as well as for willingness to do it. (pp.245-246.)

A significant issue that arises from the involvement of teachers in the process of 'debate-deliberation-choice' is the nature of the contribution they are able to make. Connelly (1972) has argued that when teachers act as curriculum developers the proximate end they have in mind is the classroom-in-action. External developers, on the other hand, tend to focus on the material product. Van Manen (1977) has pointed out that while teachers might be involved in a range of curriculum activities on a daily basis, they are more inclined to make decisions 'uncritically and unreflectively' rather than by deliberating on the choices that are available to them. This view is supported by the empirical work of Yinger (1979), McCutcheon (1979) and Smith (1986) who have studied teachers' curriculum planning processes. In general, the results have shown that while there is some attention paid to the consideration of alternatives it is more likely that teachers will make reflexive and pragmatic decisions about what is to be included in the teaching program. It also seems that teachers are more likely to make planning decisions in isolation rather than as part of a team so that opportunities for sustained dialogue seem to be limited. Where dialogue does occur it seems to be a mental process whereby the teacher weighs up the merits of alternative courses of action.

This view is reinforced by the considerable body of literature on teacher thinking (Yinger, 1986). The emphasis here has been on decision-making during interactive teaching and it seems that in this context teachers seem to make decisions at the rate of one every two minutes. While such rapidity does not rule out deliberation, it is difficult to believe that teachers who make decisions at that rate could be devoting a great deal of time to deliberating on different alternatives.

While not disputing Schwab's (1983) injunction that teachers ought to be involved as members of curriculum teams it does seem that the very culture in which teachers work may militate against them. Generally isolated, needing to make decisions under pressure and constantly forced to respond to the demands of the classroom, teachers are more used to making decisions 'on the run' rather than by using a process of deliberation and reflection. If teachers are to be involved in curriculum teams, therefore, some consideration must be given to how deliberative and reflective processes can be facilitated as part of their skills repertoire.

A number of important efforts has already been made in this direction. Sabar, Silberstein and Shafriri (1982) have reported on the important role played by curriculum co-ordinators in assisting teachers with the process of curriculum development. In a later paper focussing on the preparation of co-ordinators, Sabar and Silberstein (1987) reported:

> The co-ordinator had a crucial role in the introduction of curricular concepts and considerations into the discussions, thus making the teachers more conscious and reflective about curriculum planning skills. (p.5.)

In a similar manner, Hannay, Seller and Asselin (1987) reported that they used staff from OISE to work with teachers in curriculum teams. While they have provided no analysis that would allow judgements to be made about the respective roles of OISE staff and teachers, it could be assumed that the former acted more like the co-ordinators reported by Sabar and Silberstein (1987).

Despite the importance of this research in showing how teachers can be involved in curriculum deliberations, there remains the issue of how teachers themselves might be empowered with deliberative skills without being dependent on external consultants. How can teachers be encouraged to become involved in curriculum deliberation and what is the nature of the deliberative process of teachers who do not have access to a trained curriculum consultant or co-ordinator? These questions were raised as part of a larger study that was concerned with using inservice education to provide teachers with curriculum development skills (1983). Specifically, the questions were addressed in two stages. First, by providing a context for teachers which was designed to facilitate deliberative curriculum planning. Second, by collecting data that would allow some assessment to be made of the processes of teachers used within that context to make curriculum decisions.

CREATING THE CONTEXT

A local education authority provided funds to mount an inservice education program for teachers entitled, *Participation and Planning: The Classroom Teacher and the Curriculum Process*. The objectives of the course were to:

- Provide participants with experiences in the design, implementation and evaluation of educational materials.
- Equip participants with skills that will enable them to become effectively involved in the curriculum process, both during the course and in their schools.
- Encourage participants to appreciate the significant role they can play in their own schools, concerning curriculum.

COURSE PARTICIPANTS

Fourteen teachers attended the course and background information concerning them was collected through the administration of a pilot instrument - Attitudes to In-service Education Inventory (AIEI). They represented a considerable age range (20-60 years) with a clear majority (65%) under 40 years. They came predominantly from State schools (69%) but Catholic schools were well represented (30%) with none from independent schools. Their length of service varied, with a surprising 23% having more than 21 years' experience. The modal length of service was three

to five years. The majority of the participants were teachers who were not in administrative or promotional positions. Two main reasons were given for attending the course: Personal choice (61%) and at the request of the principal (53.8%). It should be noted that these categories were not mutually exclusive so it seems that although the principal may have been responsible in bringing the course to people's attention, the final choice was left to the participant.

COURSE ORGANISATION

It has been acknowledged in the literature that extracting staff from their local enironment for in-service education is not always successful (Lawrence, 1974). Yet, given the culture of schools with the constant demands being made of teachers it seemed that providing teachers with 'time-out' might be the very context that would assist them to become more deliberative and reflective. At the same time, there needed to be a link with the needs of schools. Thus the following course structure was adopted:

Orientation	School-Based Activity (1)	Curriculum Development	School-Based Activity (2)	Evaluation	Follow-up at Regular Intervals by Course Co-ordinators
2 days	3 days	5 days	4 weeks	2 days	

1. **Orientation:** Introduction to general curriculum processes and some specific content. The purpose is to prepare for the task of curriculum development.

2. **School-based Activity (1):** Collectionof resources, preparation of activities, dissemination of ideas.

3. **Curriculum Development:** A concentrated period of time during which a specific educational programme will be prepared by participants.

4. **School-based Activity (2):** Implementation of the prepared educational programme and further dissemination of ideas.

5. **Evaluation:** Evaluation of programme implementation and dissemination attempts. Course evaluation.

6. **Follow-up:** Evaluation continued for participants and course.

By linking the inservice program to activities that teachers did in school, it was hoped to retain a school level focus. By providing time to think about both theoretical and practical issues, it was hoped that deliberation would be facilitated.

THE CONTEXT FOR DELIBERATION

It was felt that teachers needed time to orient themselves to thinking about the curriculum development process. This orientation consisted of six sessions spread over two days. The first three of these sessions dealt with theoretical issues related to the curriculum process and the final two with the specific content to be included in the curriculum, energy education. An evaluation of the first day (consisting of three sessions) indicated that while teachers were happy with being able to clarify their views on curriculum, a number of them expressed some concern that as yet there had been no mention of content. This kind of tension is normal. For many teachers (and academics) curriculum is most often identified with content. At this stage of the course, teachers recognized that they had learnt something about curriculum without reference to content. Following a variety of activities, including lectures, group work and simulations, the group agreed to accept the view that curriculum was a process concerned with design, implementation and evaluation of educational programmes. It served as a functional definition for the purpose of the course.

The fourth session dealt with implementation as an aspect of the curriculum process. Through a simulation exercise, teachers learnt that curriculum designers often do not take implementers of their curriculum into consideration, that implementers of curriculum are naturally resistant to having change forced on them and that people in positions of authority can exert enormous influence on curriculum decision-making. In this way it was hoped that teachers would be further encouraged to adopt a client-centred rather than a product-centred view of curriculum development on being a problematic rather than a technical exercise.

In the fifth session, on the second day, teachers were introduced for the first time to the content area in which they would be asked to work: energy education. Keeping in mind that these were elementary school teachers and not subject specialists, the following strategy was adopted:

1. Printed material had been gathered from energy agencies throughout Australia. It was displayed for inspection in one part of the room. The material ranged from posters and car stickers to reports from government departments on energy needs and energy conservation techniques.

2. A 16mm film from Canada entitled *This Nuclear Age* was shown. Its purpose was to highlight one form of energy. At the same time the film raised general questions related to energy education.

3. A film strip-audio entitled, *Sun-Shine Kids* was available. It emphasized solar energy as an alternative energy source.

Basically, this was an information gathering stage. Teachers took time to become familiar with the topic. The session was very loosely structured with course co-ordinators being available when needed. The assumption behind such an approach was that adult learners probably function better in a situation that allows them to develop at their own pace. An alternative approach would have been to lecture on energy education, but the size of the topic, coupled with the relative ineffectiveness of lecture methods during in-service education courses indicated the futility of such an approach. This session, followed by a final session examining existing curriculum resources in energy education, served to provide an adequate framework for future programme development.

At the end of two days teachers had been introduced to energy education as well as ideas about the curriculum process. They then returned to their schools for three days to assess their own classroom activities in relation to energy education, to assemble possible resources and to reflect on ideas about curriculum. This school-based activity allowed teachers to try to integrate ideas from the course into their own situation. In particular, it provided time for teachers to think about issues that had been raised and possible ways of dealing with them in the remainder of the course.

PORTRAYING THE PROCESS OF DELIBERATION

On return from schools small groups of teachers worked together for five days to produce energy education programmes. Decker Walker's naturalistic model of curriculum development was used during this time. (Walker, 1971.) The model was chosen because it highlighted the deliberative process. Each group had to work out the values, ideas, theories and conceptual framework it wanted to place on energy education. It was at this stage that an attempt was made to portray the process of deliberation undertaken by teachers in order to make some assessment of it. For the purpose of this paper, an attempt has been made to focus attention on the initial formulation of the task that had been set. One of the groups of teachers agreed to have its group's discussion video-taped for later analysis. The process was relatively unobtrusive since the location of the inservice course was in a room equipped with remote control free-standing video cameras. The following observations are based on an indepth analysis of recorded episodes of three teachers planning an energy education program.

The three group members under observation moved slowly, almost reluctantly, into considering issues as a group. There were long periods of silence at the beginning. When they did focus on the issues the discussion highlighted the constraints of the task:

Rosyln:	*How quick are you at producing things?*
Helen:	*I'm very slow.*
Ron:	*I can knock it up pretty quickly.*
Roslyn:	*If we pool things.... we'll get through it.*
Ron:	*It depends on what it eventually comes down to...I mean, if it comes down to doing something...*
Roslyn:	*It may just be posing five questions each.*

van Manen, M. (1977). Linking ways of knowing with ways of being practical. *Curriculum Inquiry*. 6(3), 205-228.

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Schwab, J. (1983). The practical 4: Something for curriculum professors to do. *Curriculum Inquiry*. 13(3), 239-265.

Indeed, Roslyn often played the role of providing solutions for consideration but was not able to overcome the very significant problems identified by Ron. It is probably also significant that Roslyn and Helen were able to work through the issue. It may be that gender influenced the deliberative process in this context.

REFLECTIONS

It does seem that teachers are able to contribute to deliberative decision-making about curriculum when they are placed in a context where the pressures of their immediate work environment are not pressing in on them. Nevertheless, it also seems that when teachers do deliberate they have uppermost in their minds issues about how their classrooms ought to operate. They move backwards and forwards in considering these issues and it seems difficult for them to visualise new possibilities that ask them to rethink existing practice. Of course, it may be that existing practice is a question of principle (as it was with Ron) and that the alternative being offered is not seen as a better alternative.

If this is the case, it is important to note that group action may possibly involve giving up important principles (such as those held by Ron) for the sake of the group and for the sake of moving ahead. To what extent should teachers be encouraged to do this? This question should be explored at greater length since the present study has indicated that where matters of principle are concerned, it is difficult to seek an agreed resolution.

Indeed, the whole area of the empirical reporting of deliberative decision-making should receive more attention. The present stdy has only just begun to scratch the surface. The agenda is an important one. Hopefully, the results reported in the study have enlarged an understanding of both the contributions that teachers are able to make to the deliberative process as well as some of the limitations. Further work in the area will greatly enhance our knowledge and understanding of the role of teachers in the deliberative process.

Helen: *If you start incorporating those it could take all day.*

Roslyn: *Well, so what - if it is relevant and real?*

Helen: *I would incorporate all those things.*

Helen and Roslyn have reached agreement. They can construct an integrated program that will respect their regular classroom activities while at the same time including energy education as a main focus. As they start to think of the possibilities the solution seems an easy one - for them at least. By the end of the exchange and before Ron returns they have created an image of how an energy education program can be created for junior classes. They are conscious that their planning may not be relevant for Ron but they seem convinced that for themselves, at least, they now know how to proceed.

Unfortunately, Ron did not join this consensus. He eventually approaches the task from a purely technical perspective. He developed the required curriculum package but remained convinced that he cannot impose a program on his existing classroom structures and continued to say so throughout the planning process. Thus the deliberative process for this group was complex with all members of the group willing to explore the problem and consider alternative solutions but with one member unable to see validity in any of the solutions that were proposed. This did not prevent two other members from settling on a solution which they themselves felt met their needs and the needs of their students.

It seems evident from viewing the process on video-tape that there was a lack of structure in the deliberation and a lack of guidance. There were times when Schwab's (1983) "Chairman" or Sabar and Silberstein's (1987) "Co-ordinator" would have been able to play an important role in focussing the issues and redirecting the discussion. There were also times when it seemed as though consensus leading to action might have been reached but the dominance of Ron's views always intruded to focus attention on his main concerns. The point at which Roslyn suggested that the 'language of science' apporach might suit Ron's emphasis on language programs in his classrrom would have been an ideal one to explore but it was not taken up.

Roslyn: *You can get into graphing or things that would suit this.*

Helen: *That's already down on my program and all I would have to do is change the teaching.*

Roslyn: *The fully integrated day is the hard one to impose on...where you teach in lesson slots you can impose this.*

At this point Ron intervenes with similar arguments about the problem of imposing a program of study - he is called away from the group and Helen continues:

Helen: *In mine I can see I am using 'shelter' for my social studies and in health I've got 'ourselves'. You see, mine's wide open for this. For science its on 'trees' - that's my basis.*

Roslyn: *So an integrated program using plants and trees - the science of change from seeds to plants.*

Helen: *From what I've already done I've half implemented my energy program - because in health there's been things like the sun, what do you do in science? What sort of spors do you do? Measuring of themselves in breathing. There's a million and one activities I've got listed own. Then in shelter it goes right into different countries.*

Roslyn: *And the chain of need - what we have to predict - the more we predict the more we have to help.*

Helen: *Even the trees. The growth of the tree - what makes them grow - measuring their growth.*

Roslyn: *Well, leaving Ron aside for the moment, say we started with the junior end and see where we would go* (she starts to write). *'To Use Change as a Source of Energy.' We're into winter, aren't we? We can even tackle something like the seasons. That's a broad one. Let's take one aspect of winter. I can see this thing being integrated right across. Say with year 1, to build awareness using your classroom as the focus which takes your body, your classroom, the machines in the classroom, that is the energy sources available to the kids to run machines in the classroom. You can take every aspect you can get into. Nature; Craft; Art; Cooking; Growing; Reading; all your basic skills, maths, social studies, and just build say your afternoon program would be very much into the writing, literature, poetry.*

Roslyn: *Look, work on the principle that you're going to have to give so much time to language, so much time to science, so much time to craft, so much time to social studies and the rest of it. How do we tie those together and take the scientific emphasis we want out of each of those for our program? Does that impose on you too much?*

Ron: *No, it doesn't. I'm just...it still doesn't sort of...*

Roslyn: *It doesn't fit into your existing program - there's no way it's going to fit into your existing program, is there?*

Ron: *...unless you write off whatever you've got in your classroom - unless you write that off, right now. I'm talking in terms of implementing this then whatever you do, if you're trying to integrate with whatever is there at the moment - if what is going on in the classroom at the moment is not justaposed to that then you can't look at it in terms of realism and sort of ..zy, well, you know, the process of curriculum difussion tradionally found.....I ran into these problems which have been - or this and that and the other problem and that is a problem because they were already self-imposed - it's a false situation...*

At this point the group has again steered away from looking at solutions to rearticulating the problems. Roslyn's second attempt to get Ron to focus on a method for resolving the problem is overrun by his concern not to impose the energy education program on existing classroom practice. As he sees it, that would be a recipe for failure and that is the point of his final comment. Yet Helen, who has been away from the group for a little while gathering resources, also starts to see a way through the problem:

Helen: *Actually, I can incorporate it into most of my things the way I am thinking about it at the moment.*

Roslyn: *Can you explain the way you're thinking?*

Helen: *With maths I can incorporate it. Instead of doing, say its measuring time or something...*

Ron: *You couldn't do it the same way - it would be impossible.*

Roslyn: *Say it got an hour a day - would that blow your program?*

Ron: *Probably not - it just depends on how we go about it. This is where the problems lie.*

Roslyn: *You're imposing something...*

Ron: *What it means, in fact, is that you can't give it a fair chance of being implemented with any realism at all. What you're saying is that you develop a certain philosophical line - you develop your overall program along those lines and you specify sectors within it and then you can't implement it along the philosophical lines with a fully integrated approach because it is a false environment. So when you evaluate it you are going to have to say it is a write-off before you start it. It's a false thing and this is what's concerning me. We're putting ourselves in a false situation because there really is no accountability.*

Roslyn: *And I have to work the other way because I'm imposing on somebody from the beginning and I have to structure it into packages so that they can handle it - I don't teach that way.*

The dialogue here is important (the third member of the group was not present) because it demonstrates how the initial problem has been reconceptualised. It is now a question of whether the teachers can uphold their belief in the concept of a integrated teaching program while implementing an 'imposed' program in energy education. At the same time there are tentative attempts to provide solutions as Roslyn suggests to Ron that one way of integrating energy education with his language program would be to deal with the language of science. The suggestion is passed over but it is the first tentative attempt at seeking a solution. It is perhaps of interest to note that by the end of the dialogue Roslyn is not posing anymore solutions but seems to have been convinced that the problem needs further elaboration and thought. Nevertheless, she emerges a little later with an attempt to formulate the problem in an alternative way:

Ron: *Or it might be...there's very little you can do in these terms...you are basically talking about implementing a program in a four week period - that in essence is what it is about...even if you develop a whole term's stuff, you're only being asked to implement four weeks because you've got to come back and report on the progress of that. I'm certainly not going to...When we go back, how many weeks have we got left in the term?*

Roslyn: *Do you want to divide it into small pieces?*

Ron: *The only way to have a small piece is to say this is the overall thing here - and this is one aspect of it...*

Roslyn: *It is most probably the initiating aspect of it so you can show which tangents the kids want to go off at...If you write a good program the kids are wanting to 'hare off' into all sorts of things.*

Helen: *We'd better start on the program then.*

There is a tension revealed here betweent he demands of the task - the construction of a four week program on energy education - and the demands of the classroom - the extent to which such a program can be fitted in to the general teaching program and how it can be made to cater for the needs and interests of students. At this stage there is no agreed image about what the program might look like - rather, the emphasis is on articulating the task in problematic terms. This group of teachers did not treat the task as technical and procedural - from the beginning it was a task that needed to be placed in the context of classroom and school realities.

Eventually, the problem is refined as one that raises fundamental issues:

Roslyn: *Is it going to be a fairly integrated thing so that you teach basick skills until lunch...then give it the afternoon?*

Ron: *Some of those things are going to be very interesting for me because I have language programs running across most of the day - individualized ones...little language kits.*

Roslyn: *More or less self-contracts? Can we build it around the language of science?*